



The Big Windows Review

Issue 17 Fall 2019

The Big Windows Review is a publication of the Writing Center at Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI, USA. We publish poems and short (500 words or less) prose.

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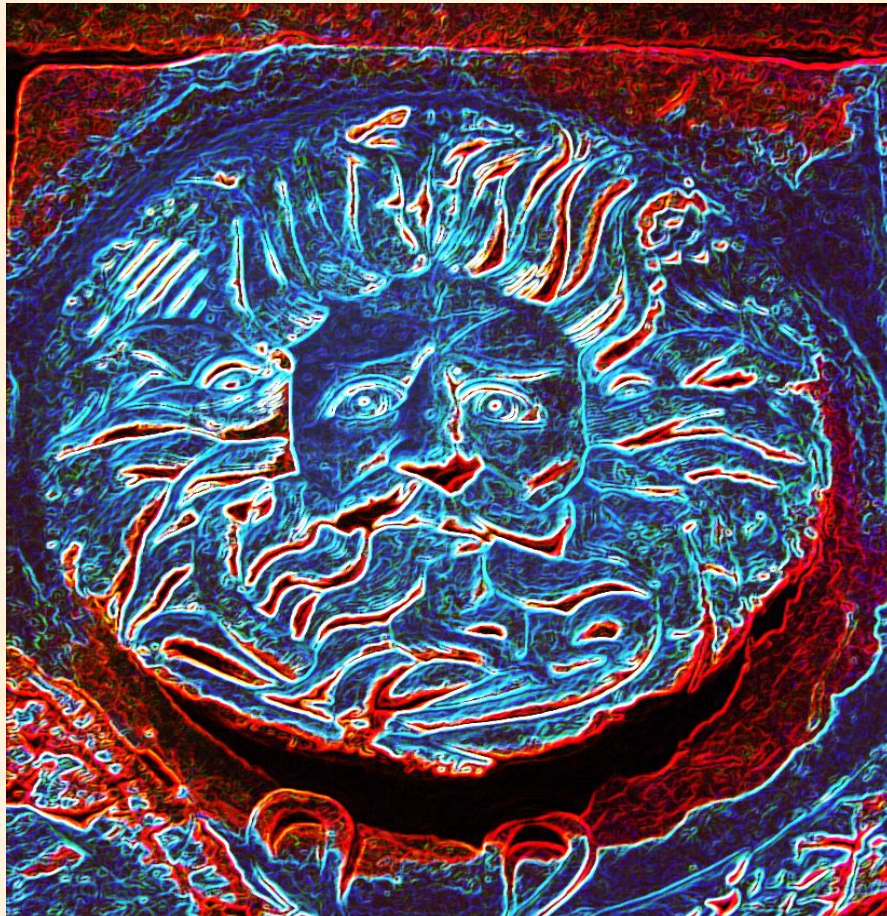
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Mike Maple

Pulling Silver

On my 21st birthday
I pulled a single silver strand from my head
and saw my future life flash before my eyes.
I saw myself through the mirror
waiting by the phone for my grandkids to call
pulling the final white strand from my bald head.
Trying to remember the day I pulled my first.

Edward Vidaurre

Capsized

I always thought of dad as an ocean
Spume frothing from his mouth

Mom would say tilt his head to one side
I pretended I controlled the sea

Somewhere waves were created when I did that,
so I looked at him and drew tiny boats on

his lips and cheeks, he moaned and groaned and I
pretended the sea was mad, so I drew

pirates on his chin, sometimes the sea would
gargle and toss back at me all the plastics and

garbage, pieces of sailors and forgotten
ships would emerge, one time he opened his eyes

and his green orbs flashed a mermaid
playing a violin, playing a song of longing

Anna Teresa Slater

Forty-Two

Milk, mum, nappies, mum, milk, sometimes dad,
blanket wrap, a squeezey duck,
a twinkling tin can with useful words:
tears broken window not that,
elephant-shaped milk chocolate cornflakes,
please, something to make them stop.
Pimple-popping machine, mouth filter,
box wine, a joint, true love's kiss,
that boy at the dance, a seventh chance,
condoms, pepper spray, ice pack,
an eraser to rub it all out,
sometimes dad to hold me up.

A passport, yen, rubles, rupees, pounds,
a real reason to go home,
black coffee, god, Simone de Beauvoir,
a self-slap, a megaphone,
a forgiving church, a midday nap,
a warning before the call.

Old photos of them, alive and young,
something else to hold me up,
hair dye, another day, midnight song,
milk tea, Tao Te Ching, white lies,
a twinkling tin can with useful words:

Accept Let go It's okay.

Erren Kelly

Coffeehouse Poem #339

Mourning doves coo
As the rain falls silent
As dreams
A girl types on her laptop
She wears her homeland
On her face
She shows me home
Through her eyes
They never lie
They tell me

Everything

Joseph Farley

Morning Rise

Syringes and orange juice
Start the day,
An early morning fix
To get through
The beggar morning.

Naught

I regret nothing,
that zero.
How could it intrude
into the world of numbers?
We would be in our prime
if I called the shots.
But nothing is there
under the bed
and in the closet.
It's odd these days,
and the nights uneven,
all empty as a ghost
hungry to be there.

Reverse Psychology

Pauline decided to rent a cabin in the woods where she could die peacefully. She sold her house and everything in it except for some clothes, her car, and a framed photo of her beloved toy poodle, Beau. For weeks, she lived among tall trees where no light could penetrate. At night, her heavy head sunk deep into the pillow. Once, she heard a terrible scream, but knew it was a vixen calling out to her mate. She went back to sleep, unafraid. If it had been human, if someone had wanted to come in and kill her, *so what?* She put her trust in the Good Lord, knowing that soon she would enter His Holy Kingdom.

Instead of growing weaker, however, Pauline grew stronger. The food she'd packed in had run out. Her appetite, ravenous. One afternoon, she decided to drive her old reliable Buick into town to buy some groceries. On the way, she passed a purple Baja Bug in a dumpy car lot. A frivolity, the modified Beetle nonetheless called out to her. She had always lived her life inside the lines. She went back, traded her car on the spot, and drove off.

When she got into town it was late. She was famished. There was only one restaurant, a bar, its neon sign promising "Liquor – Dancing."

A good Baptist, Pauline had never let alcohol pass through her lips. Nor had she ever smoked or danced. Entering a place like the Stumble Inn was sinful. Even so, she parked her Baja Bug outside and went in, sliding into an empty booth in the corner.

A man with a mischievous mustache sashayed over and slid in across from her. At first, she thought he might be a ghost who'd walked out of the wood paneling.

"You must be new in town."

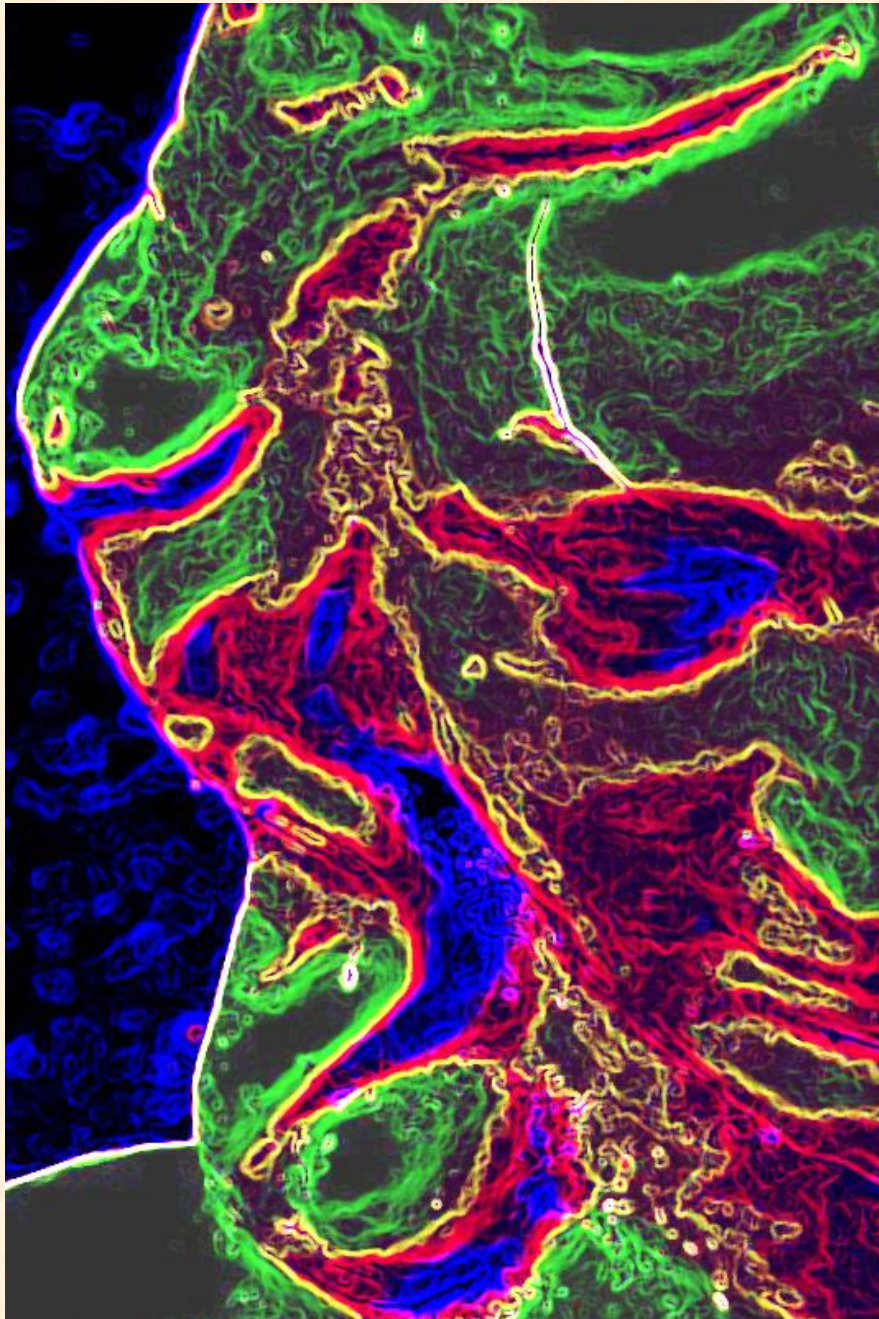
"Just passing through."

He offered her a smoke. Though Pauline had been taught that cigarettes were harmful to one's health, her body a temple, she thought, *Why not?* The man tapped out a stick, and she put it between her lips and let him light it, and immediately she choked. The man raised one of his bushy eyebrows. They both laughed. After a while, she got the hang of it, holding the cigarette gracefully between her fingers, sucking its smoky warmth into her lungs.

The man plunked some quarters into the jukebox.

“Dance?”

Pauline didn't hesitate. He escorted her onto the floor where it was just the two of them. The bartender and waitress looked on, while Tony Bennett crooned “On a Clear Day You Can See Forever.” The man reined her in tight, his flannel shirt soft against her skin, his Old Spice Cologne tickling her nostrils. He pressed her tightly, their hips held together like praying hands.



Joe Balaz

Wen I Wuz Eating

Genghis Khan
wen suddenly materialize before me

in da fast food restaurant
wen I wuz eating my meal.

He told me dat he wen kill moa warriors
and bagged moa women

den I could evah hope to
in one hundred lifetimes.

I wuzn't impressed

and I wuz actually moa irritated
wen he kept asking me

why I nevah like mayonnaise
on my burger.

He keep pressing da issue
on how much he enjoyed it

so I had to tell him
if he liked it so much

den moa bettah
he go order one foa himself.

Genghis got angry wit me

and two huge bodyguards wit axes
instantaneously appeared at his side

and dey wuz staring me down.

I told him and da adah guys,

“Eh, Temujin,

no try muscle in on me wit your goons
especially wen I minding my own business.”

Da buggah went ballistic
wen he heard dat

and started ranting and crying
cause I wen use his kid name

dat wen remind him
of his rough and unfortunate boyhood.

I heard he had to wear wun big yoke
around his neck foa awhile

but I nevah have anyting to do wit dat.

Howevah

making him aware of his past
wen work foa me

cause Genghis

went storming out
da front door of da fast food restaurant

taking his bodyguards wit him.

Now I could at least enjoy my meal
in peace.

Dats wat I taught

until Attila the Hun
came out of da restroom

and sat down in front of me.

Maybe because of his bloody reputation

he kept asking me
ovah and ovah again

why I put so much ketchup
on my French fries.

I almost wen answer him

wen Alexander the Great
wen burst into da front door

and immediately pushed to da front
of da line

so he could order wun strawberry shake
and wun new world taco.
I tell you

dis is da last time
I coming to dis place on Halloween.

James Owens

In the Strange Light Before the Storm

Robed in hushed
starlings, the maple

longs for a violence
that will tear loose

a near-forgotten cry.
The earth's breath

goes before the rain
and touches your face.

Lightning rips open
a cloudbank like

a sudden flaw in memory.
Among those leaves

already fallen, a red
worry rustles and stirs.

Robert Hasselblad

The King of Montana

1.

After a chance grass fire
burned house, barn, privy to cinders
she hurled curse upon curse at lightning,
the wide sky it leapt from,
their sorry farm that took it dead-center.

She swore to him this time she meant it.
Would wire her father for the money,
buy a one-way train ticket back to Dayton.

He told her he'd be lost
without her hand on his,
their hearts both beating
to the promise of these fields.

She laughed.
"Oh you'll do dandy without me,
camping in this blamed tent.
Soon enough you'll trick some other sheep-eyed gal
into thinking this three hundred twenty acres
is the Front Porch of Paradise
and you're the King of Montana!"

2.

Two weeks later he drove her to the depot in Billings.
He guessed she'd earned
one summer with her kin
while he rebuilt.
"Okay then Sophie. Say howdy to the folks for me.
Have a good summer, and I'll look for you—
say in Autumn, before the snow hits?

Silent, she turned back, looked at him.
Just once.

3.

Decades later, he sat with his brother
in the farm house he'd built that summer
when she went home.

Chores done, sky darkening,
their dinner dishes cleared away,
one bottle of Four Roses between them.

"Did you never hear from that Ohio lady?" the brother asked.
"I always kind of wondered about her."

Nels glanced then at his pinewood desk,
the drawer with his dozen letters,
all from her first year away.
Sent back unopened, marked "Return to Sender."

He had known for decades
it was never the land,
which he still worked and
which fed him well enough.
His true folly? Thinking
to haul a coal merchant's daughter
away from privilege
out to this barren stretch of nowhere.
To live on whim and luck
and mistake these for love.

"No Olaf," he said.
"Not hardly for a long time."

Alexina Dalgetty

Getting the Cogs to Fit

Michelle mixed colours never seen before, golden and fresh green daylights, purple and orange night times. She dusted over old landscapes with new ideas. She shifted perspective. She elongated trees. She owned the leisurely landscape.

Her paintings sold. They sold well. They sold for more money than Michelle thought anyone should pay for a modern day painting. She searched her canvasses for clues to their value. She eyed their competence and plausibility, their creative use of new colour, shadow, and perspective. It bewildered her. But still, she painted.

Her children grew older and left home. They had children of their own. They clattered through her house, demanding she paint their squirming babies. Her colours didn't mix right for babies. They looked underdone and over roasted. Her children didn't care. They oohed and ahed. They paid for frames and hung the awful likenesses.

Her husband stopped working. Instead of packing a lunch and going to an office or wherever it was he used to go – she couldn't quite remember, so much art in her head – he stayed in bed until late. He did odd jobs around the house and volunteered with the local historic society. He spent peculiarly long periods of time in the garden shed.

Gliding elegant into old age, Michelle woke one day compelled to paint cogs. Dry sandy dust coloured cogs. Orangey, brownny, sludgy cogs. Each fitting into the other. Working in harmony. She saw them with the painterly eye that lived in the fibres of her heart. Cogs in motion, an engine to life. Each morning she painted the cogs and each evening she painted the canvass blank. The cogs refused to fit in paint the way they fit in her heart.



Carlos Andrés Gómez

Poem about Death Ending with Reincarnation

after Matthew Olzmann & Tarfia Faizullah

Blood has its own democracy.
My father & I puncture steaks
& watch them ooze—deep maple
walls eavesdrop as steel teeth

scrape & claw the porcelain
we use to distract our manically
clenching jaws. I'm well-practiced
in this ritual: empty & fill, empty

& fill, until there's nothing.
Our filets gone, we sit & stare
at the eggshell table spread,
abdomens swelling like silence—

They found a mass.
She's having surgery next week.
I had always planned for him
to be first. Now the woman

fifteen years his junior, mother
to my twin baby siblings, is dying
or might be. I've been rehearsing
years for this talk, except it isn't—

my father, held only by the dim
lighting that shrouds his silhouette,
reduced to heaving. I envision
the stepmom it took me eleven years

to embrace being lowered carefully
into the damp earth, an old man,
flanked by two teenagers, watching,
& I will be there too: an overcast

Tuesday that no one passing by
will remember, & as usual, I won't
be able to get the dimple right
in my tie. For a second, although

we are nowhere near the mountains,
I will smell the crisp air she so
loved & remember the first time
we walked without the heaviness

of that first encounter both of us
carried for far too long. But on that
unremarkable day for most, a light
rain will interrupt the hike I am on

in my mind, a man will read overly-
rehearsed words from a book she
did not believe in, & we will stand
like guards, numb. We will watch over

the sacred earth she spent an entire
lifetime trying to protect, now her
home, flanked by roots cross-stitching
the rich soil, what becomes the promise

kept to those endless rows of buds
ready to push through & that twisted
symmetry just above, a dangled blade
from a mouth chewing in first light.

Madelyn Kreienheder

At Peace with Death

I didn't wear shoes today—
Despite knowing I'd have to sidestep
Many rocks and grains of glass—
I prefer to feel the ground, even if it hurts.

At first I let my dog choose the way
Until we neared downtown,
And as suddenly as the sun started her descent
I knew our destination.

Flanked by forgotten shop buildings
On a haggard brick road,
The sun teased my eyes
Drifting below the hill

Leaving a trail of light
Through the open doors
Of the black, barbed gate
Brooding over the cemetery.

The sun welcomed me in,
So I followed with my bare feet.

I imagine that I should feel fear
As my toes caress the cool ground others sleep in,

And yet I've always felt comfort instead
As I walk between the beds of the dead.

Rebecca Ruth Gould

Signless Sky

for Khaqani (d. 1199), prison poet of Shirvan

Ever since I was a child,
I loved to stare at the stars.
Before I could trace the Pleiades,
I wanted to be an astronomer.

I learned to decipher the skies:
Perseus, Aquarius, Scorpio,
& Hercules gave me a compass
to navigate the heavens.

Khaqani, the Persian necromancer
who fancied himself a god.
taught me to read
the signs of fate inscribed above.

My childhood cosmos
rearranged Greek fantasies.
You read the signs of the Ka'ba
from your prison cell.

When the sky was stripped
of signs & my gods died,
our visions became one.
Khaqani, my troubadour.

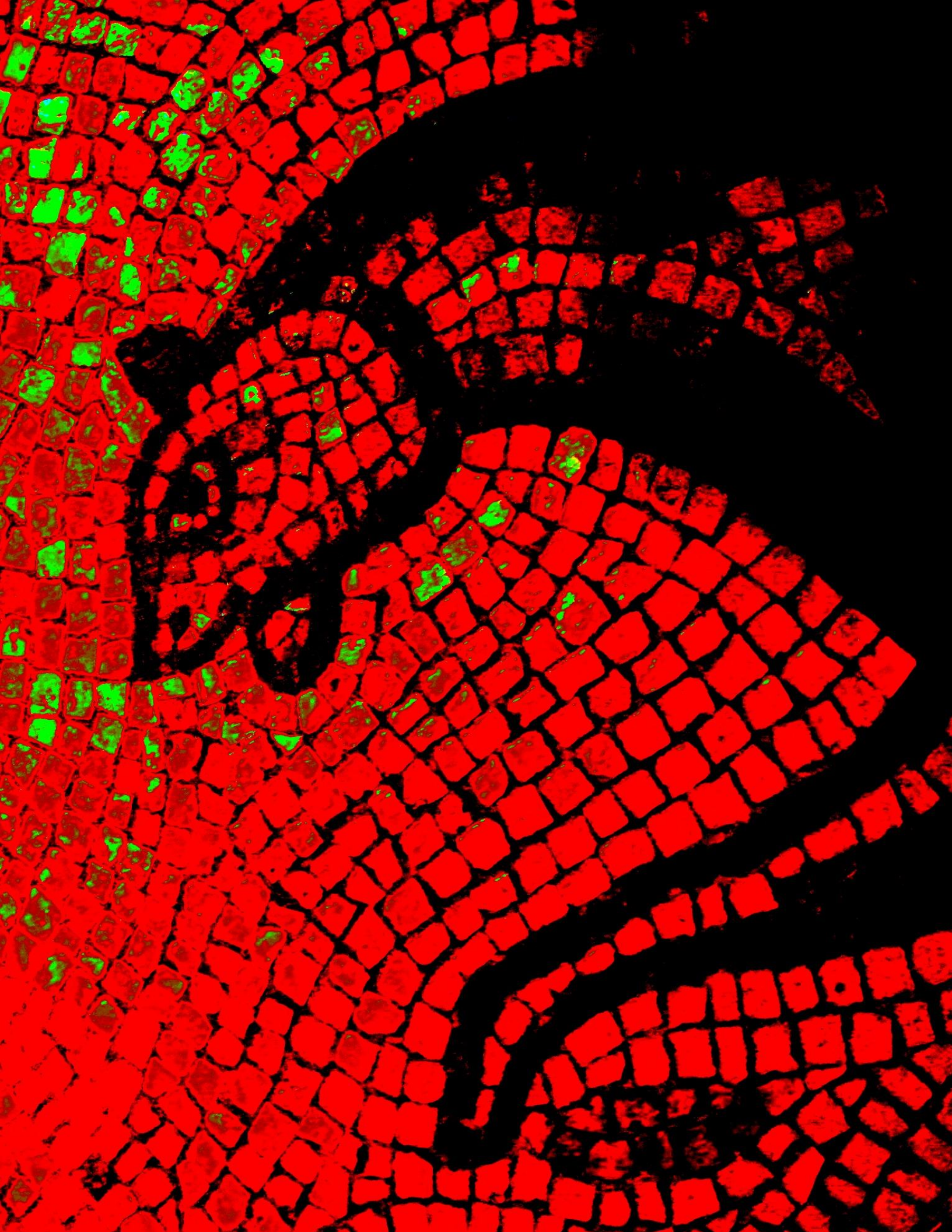
Now, when I gaze upwards
at midnight, the signless sky
gazes back at me with your artful,
ineffable, incarcerated sighs.

George Freek

I Dream of My Death

after Li Po

A cloud stumbles over
the remaining light,
as day dissolves into night.
A sickle moon cuts into my dreams.
Trees are bent like old men,
huddled around a circle of stones,
trying to warm fleshless bones.
I hear the lake's waves,
cracking against the shore
like voices of the dead,
calling from their graves.
From the lake's pavilion,
voices are faraway.
Are they happy or sad?
I no longer care. I can
barely hear them anymore.
Languid anemone line
the barren waste of the shore.



Holly Day

Summer Love

The places he'd been, with convoluted names
were as exotic as the places he'd lived
men bent spades into birdhouses

I wanted so badly to be with him in Colorado
to stand in the exact spot where four state lines met
and survive it all. He kept saying, Next time, next time, I promise.

I waited by the lake for him to come and get me
visions of Indianapolis burning holes in my brain
but he never came back to get me, never took me away.

Thom Young

Love

love came back
to haunt
us
with a gun
in her hands
we sat over
a bowl of cold cereal
and
laughed
at how the world
used to be
I never saw her again
after that
but sometimes
I hurt for no reason
at all.

Thom Young

Hell

you can find hell
in many things
in a cold stare of a lady
in a green dress
buying purple onions
and milk for a cat
that hates her.
in a small child pounding
its skull on a concrete wall
somewhere in California.
in the eyes of lovers
walking in a park at night
as Butterscotch lamps
shine on.
yes, you can hell in many
things.

Robert Beveridge

Decay

When there is nothing left but sky,
but air,
all there is to do
is look up
and wonder

Just You Wait Until Your Mother Gets Home

is it the hot dogs or the sense
of existential dread that keeps
us at the kitchen table, awake,
at two AM? We think this is
debatable, but we ran out
of relish three hours ago.
We pull the halves apart, add
the extension leaf, stare
into its starless void.

Robin Ray

Antics

Grandma cooked swill again tonight. She hates us. Brother shaved the dog with a one-blade razor tossed by the roadside.

No salve to its nicks. Sister snipped off every rose's flower. Peonies and dahlias, too. Claimed Morticia Addams spurred

this behavior. Brother blazed the trash bin in World History class. Blamed the quiet autistic kid in the back. Sister

blackened her ex-friend's eyes. Joked about us being abandoned by a duo currently drugging it up in a seraglio

somewhere. Swill settles the gurgle but won't palliate the ridicule. Maybe running away can.

Ilya Gutner

Two Chinese Poems

1

Four pigs, three dogs,
two patient apple-acres waiting
wrapped in brown papers
for the Market Act
of their life's drama.

From the goats to the pigs
I walk picking up fallen apples
and bring food to the dogs.

Let me change the water in your bowl,
let me sit with you, friend mutt, forgetting
without wine the one fact of my life.

Visiting a farm
near the Northern Capital about nine months
into my psychosis.

2

I take the keys, take money,
close the door, cross the tracks
where trains approach the city's heart
and then I cross the bridge
and go down to the river.

Green plant floating
under drizzling rain.
Good-bye, my friend.

The way back up
not burdened by you
is steeper than before.

Giving proper funeral
to the green plant with brown leaves
on my balcony.



Morgan Bazilian

Dublin

Dublin in the sun
Stilted and foreign
Not used to the attention

The light moving into the corners and cracks
The bits of dust
The drunks, pale skin turned red

She showed herself
Down Camden Street
With the flowers and the fruit from Spain

The people squint from inside pubs
Or out on the quay drinking light pints
The canal starting to smell

Old men rolling up their pants
In Stephen's Park
Winding trails of asphalt

Thrown out fried food
Mixed with glass
And dried blood on the curb

Then the night
A small red tinge in amorphous clouds
And a hint of quiet

Sofiul Azam

Who Doesn't Want to Make Love to Someone's Wife?

I

Right from the word Go, I knew well that I'd have to
cut down on fantasies, that I might even have
to hide from society's moral pretension
the process of pupation to get transformed

as a well-loved butterfly. You know people do wrongs
lovingly or so they say. Yet while it's
not totally wrong, I'll go the extra mile for it;
who doesn't want to make love to someone's wife?

What it boils down to is that its manyfold answer
might sound harsh. Could I borrow you?
I promise you will be returned unhurt to him
who'll know nothing of rain's work on a taro leaf.

It's not a long distance love affair, rather a thrill
of honey collection from a wild forest. Rekindle
your fantasies about how or when love is enjoyed at its best.
Let's do it in whatever ways we can.

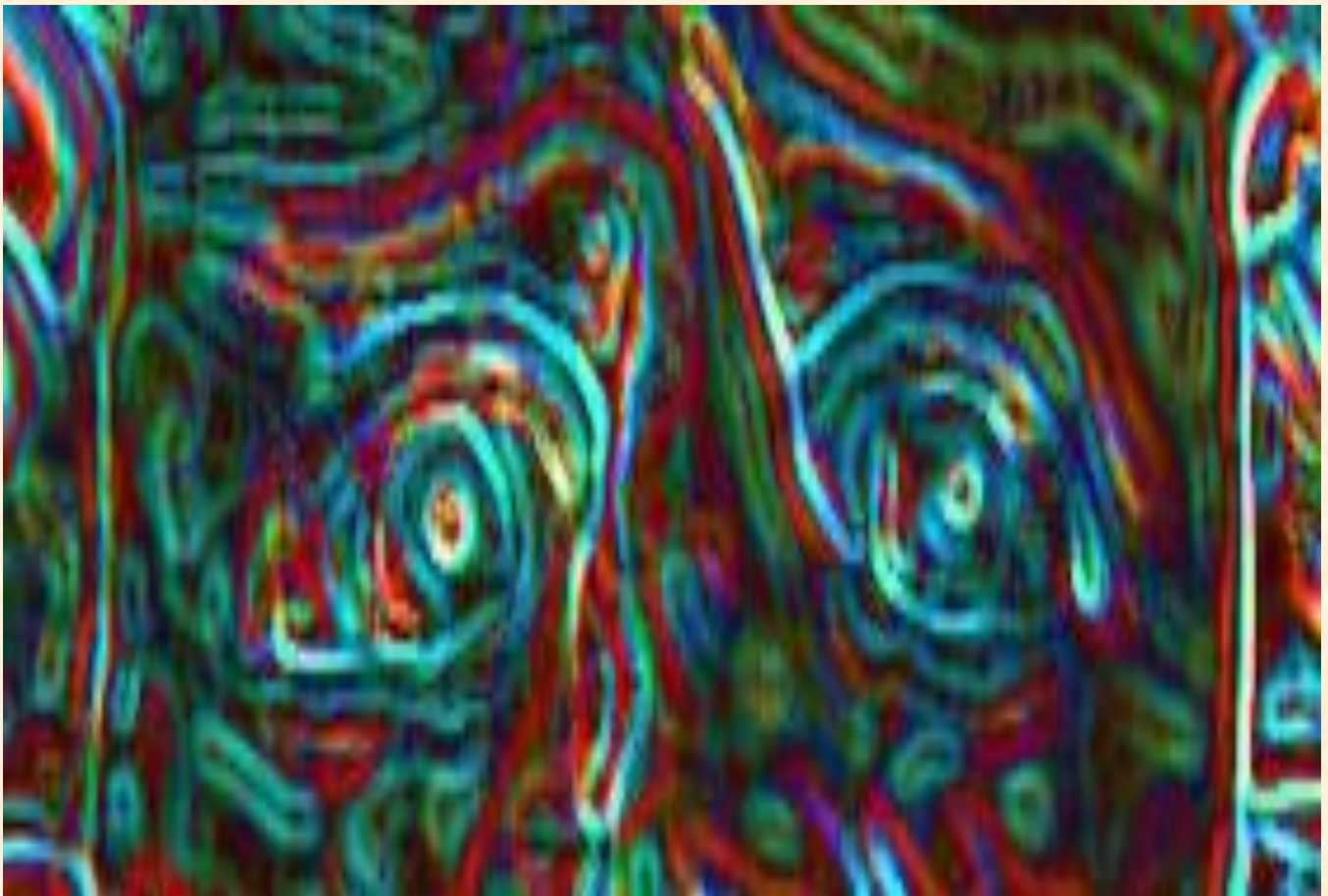
II

I'm sure both of us have never been to a vineyard.
Yet the moment someone utters "vineyard"
I start dreaming of making love
to you who I'll do everything to live with forever,

on a vineyard's drained soil
littered with gray leaves and pruned canes,
yes, of course, between rows of vines full of red grapes
with the sunlight making them look like rubies.

I also want to do it with you under the moonlight,
between rows of vines with clusters of ripe grapes
staying covered except for the star-spangled sky,
before harvesting grapes rich in color starts in late summer.

But I don't think the owner of any winery
will let it happen. Maybe you to whom I hope this won't
seem to be a one-night stand know
most of our fantasies might remain fantasies.



Glenn Ingersoll

you have to come to a certain place

with your eyes closed
your hands behind your back
fingers interlaced
toes pointing in
scarf slipping from your neck
a pigeon on your hat
a booger stuck in your nose hairs
a bead of sweat on the tip of each nipple
knees red
buttocks itchy
a fly's the only wings on your shoulders

Lara Dolphin

Nordmarka

Imagine each spring
a writer goes to a forest in Norway
to hand over a book
that will not be read for 100 years
until the trees are cut for paper
and words once hidden
wake from silent madness
tying nature to art
and the past
to our unknowable future.

In This Silent Room

in the quiet of the Deichman Library
a century of words will wait
for one thousand growing evergreens
for our children's children
and for the promise of tomorrow.

Philip Fried

Confidential Memo

The raid

Since data and deponents were going missing,
I dispatched my agents on a pre-dawn raid
through the brain's neuronal mega-metropolis,
to seize clues and re-depose witnesses
so I could reconstruct a narrative
and reach a verdict in this years-old case.
Armed with warrants, the agents went in, and returned
not with a flock of biddable witnesses
but with a scattering of laconic exhibits.

The evidence

One yellow crayon, wielded in kindergarten
and possibly still colluding with a hand
to color a cardboard crown so well that no
gap would mar the glowing waxy surface
*Who ordered this job and for what unspoken purpose
outside the lawful borders of the blackboard?*

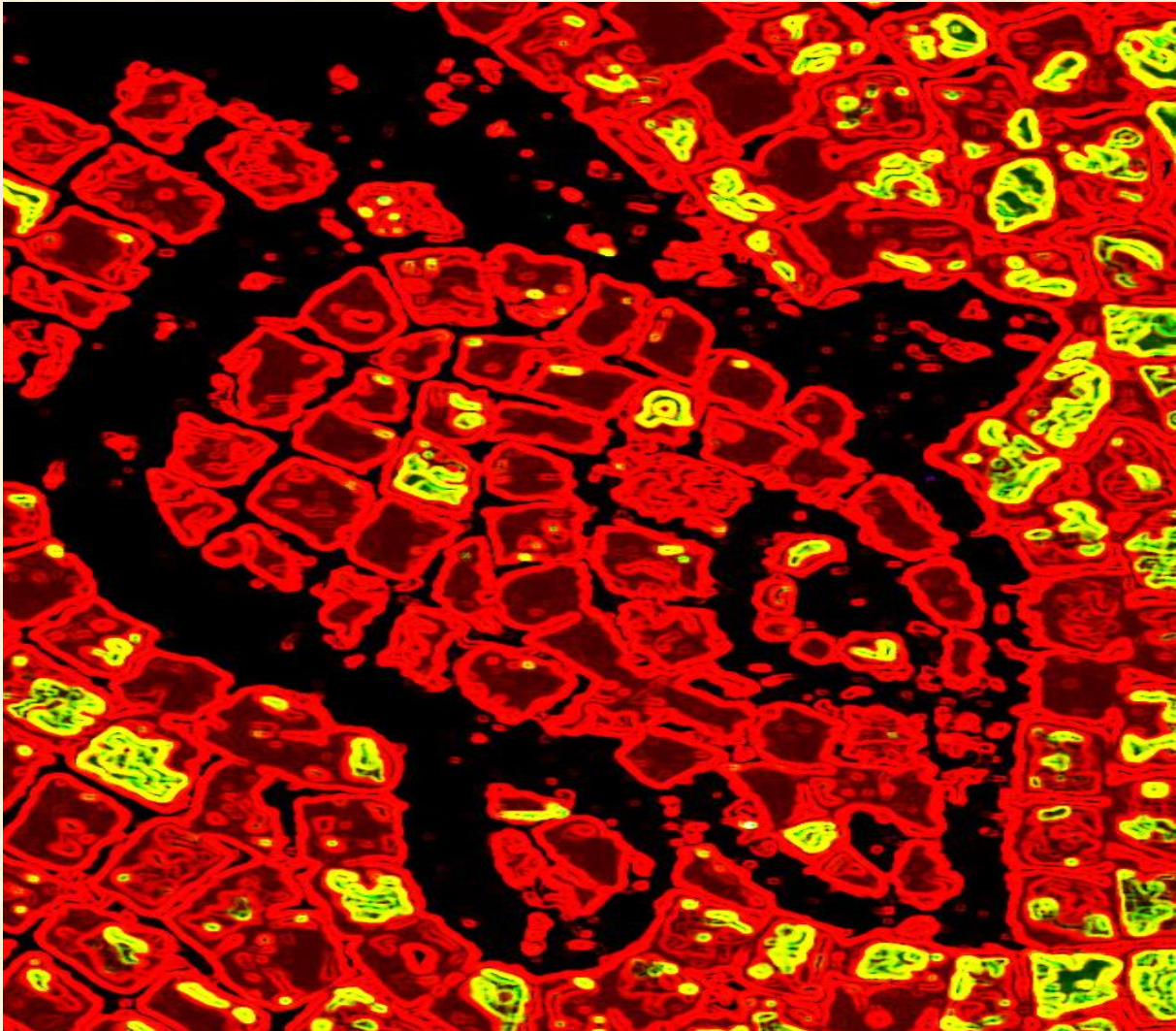
One bowlegged yellow plastic cowboy, lost
beneath a car seat, having survived so many
shoot-outs, brought back from the totaled car by father,
tight-lipped and ghost-white after his passenger died
*What can we read into this stoic one's silence
regarding the darkness, the rain-slicked road, and the skid?*

One yellow rain slicker with hood and chemical
odor, synthetic that outshone the sun,
encased a child like a turtle or deep-sea diver,
and seemed to exude, as if sweating, beaded droplets

*Will the slicker, still dripping, devoid of a body but subject
to forensic probing, yield up the truth about shame?*

The dream

Arguing in the Supreme Court of the Cranium
housed behind a giant brow's facade,
I was multiple, unruly: accuser, defender
dueling the gavel with motions and counter-motions;
guard whose synaptic epaulets sparked mayhem;
and judge whose wig was a maze of convolutions.



Alan Elyshevitz

Identity

It would take an actuary
to count this colony of old Jews
who frequent a tailor from Palermo.
Once, I was a teacher, married late.
Polymorph, I am a composite
of chromosomes and scars.
Sometimes my old bull mastiff
perceives me as nothing,
sometimes everything.

Sam Norman

Fifty Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Nine

Standing in front of the classroom
talking about the Vietnam War
preparing them for the novel they
were about to read, I was drifting
inside myself, barely noticing my
surroundings, thinking about my
son.

When I came to the slide labeled
“casualties” I froze. Fifty-eight
thousand, two hundred and nine it
reads in stark white, 32 point font.
Fifty-eight thousand, two hundred
and nine knocks at the door. Military
servicemen saying the now-famous
words: *We regret to inform you...*
The same words that were spoken
to me at my door.

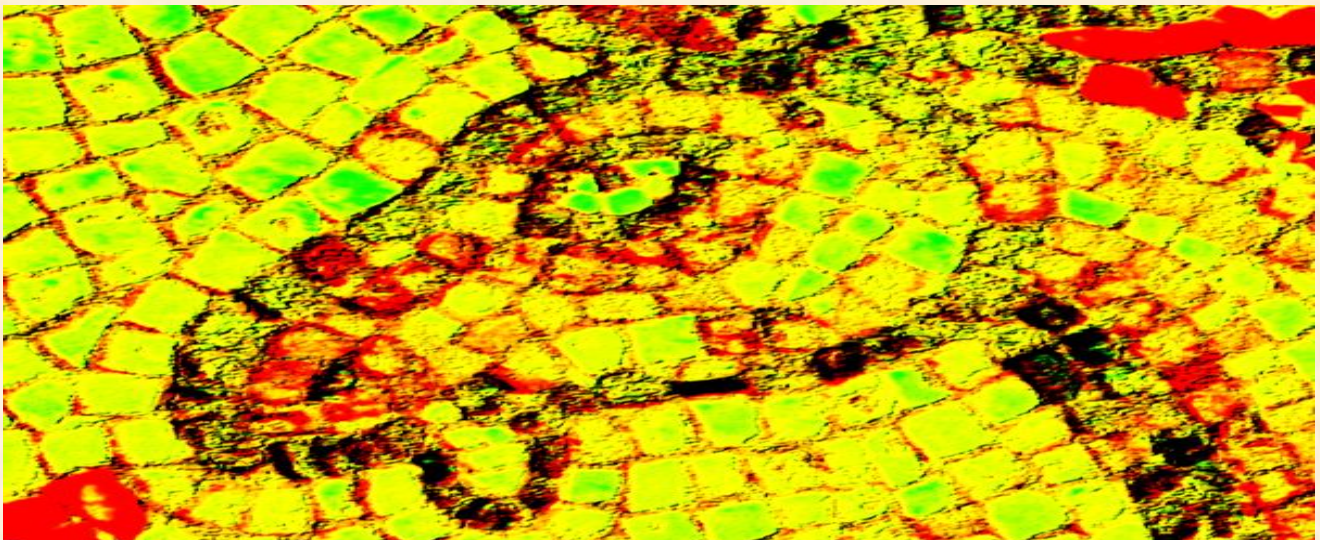
I imagine the responses varied:
anger and wailing and violence
and crying and dropping to their
knees and crying and screaming
NO! Did any other parent hug
the Petty Officer trying to get
the words out and whisper *It's
ok, I already know about my
son.*

Fifty-eight thousand, two hundred
and nine funerals, most of which

included rifles shooting blanks
in the air—the sound of taps playing
in the background, the color guard
slowly, carefully folding the flag
that covered their child.
Presenting the flag to their loved ones,
like they did for my son.

How did they manage the anger,
the crying, the denial, the feeling
of isolation, of being broken? How
do we manage when overwhelmed
by a car, a rainy night, the horrible
knock on the door.

A student says, *But I don't get it, why
did we fight in this war?* and I think,
back in the moment, fifty-eight
thousand, two hundred and nine families
asking the same question, *why?*
Just as I do, every moment, about my
son.



ayaz daryl nielsen

Two Poems

the bent spines
of chimney smoke-
a cold winter day

a house filled
with your absence

Contributors

Sofiul Azam has three poetry collections—*Impasse* (2003), *In Love with a Gorgon* (2010), *Safe under Water* (2014)—and has edited *Short Stories of Selim Morshed* (2009). His work has appeared in magazines across the world. He is working on *Persecution*. He currently teaches English at World University of Bangladesh.

Joe Balaz has created works in American English and Hawaiian Islands Pidgin (Hawai'i Creole English). He presently lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and he is the author of *Pidgin Eye*.

Morgan Bazilian has published about 50 poems.

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *New American Legends*, *Toho Journal*, and *Chiron Review*, among others.

Alexina Dalgetty lives in Stratford, Ontario, the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. She has recently started writing short stories.

Holly Day's poetry has recently appeared in *Plainsongs*, *The Long Islander*, and *The Nashwaak Review*.

Lara Dolphin is a chocolate addict, slacktivist, and determined dreamer. A recovering attorney, novice nurse, and full-time mother of four amazing kids, she is elated and exhausted most of the time.

Alan Elyshevitz is the author of a collection of stories, *The Widows and Orphans Fund* (SFA Press), and three poetry chapbooks, most recently *Imaginary Planet* (Cervena Barva). His poems have appeared in *River Styx*, *Nimrod International Journal*, and *Water~Stone Review*, among many others. Winner of the James Hearst Poetry Prize from North American Review and the Nightjar Poetry Prize, he is also a two-time recipient of a fellowship in fiction writing from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. For further information, visit <https://aelyshevitz.ink>.

Joseph Farley edited *Axe Factory* from 1986 – 2010. His books and chapbooks include *Suckers*, *For the Birds*, *Longing for the Mother Tongue*, *Her Eyes*, and *Labor Day*. *Labor Day*, a novel, is being reissued in a special edition by Peasantry Press. Farley's work has appeared recently in *US 1 Worksheets*, *Home Planet News Online*, *Mad Swirl*, *Ygdrasil*, and *Horror Sneeze Trash*.

George Freek is a poet/playwright living in Belvidere, IL. His poetry has appeared in *Carcinogenic Poetry*, *The Adelaide Review*, *Off Course*, *The Tipton Poetry Journal*, *The Ottawa Review of the Arts*, and *The Sentinel Liteayr Quarterly*. His plays are published by Playscripts, Inc.; Lazy Bee Scripts; and Off The Wall Plays.

In the spring of 2020, Salmon Poetry, Ireland, will publish **Philip Fried**'s eighth book of poetry. Thomas Lux said about his work, "I love Philip Fried's elegant quarrels with the cruelty and ignorance of the world or, more precisely, its inhabitants."

Carlos Andrés Gómez is a Colombian American poet and the author of *Hijito*, winner of the Broken River Prize. His writing has been published in the *New England Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. Carlos is a graduate of the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. <http://www.CarlosLive.com>

Rebecca Ruth Gould's poems and translations have appeared in *Nimrod*, *Kenyon Review*, *Tin House*, *The Hudson Review*, *Waxwing*, *Wasafiri*, and *Poetry Wales*. She translates from Persian, Russian, and Georgian, and has translated books such as *After Tomorrow the Days Disappear: Ghazals and Other Poems*, by Hasan Sijzi of Delhi (Northwestern University Press, 2016) and *The Death of Bagrat Zakharych and Other Stories*, by Vazha-Pshavela (Paper & Ink, 2019). A Pushcart Prize nominee, she was a finalist for the Luminaire Award for Best Poetry (2017) and (with Kayvan Tahmasebian) for Lunch Ticket's Gabo Prize (2017).

Ilya Gutner writes, "These poems are written in a style adapted from the English sonnet, reduced to its minimal components, number of lines and metric numbers. Instead of counting syllables, one counts the words, and counts the title as part of the poem, setting out its context. Since the great majority of English words are either monosyllables or natural iambs, the sound remains a unity even without the steel string of the syllabic meter. Since the English language has a great variety of

natural demetrifications which make it be a choppy, backward language except where it has had its hair combed slick for a presentation, the same counting of words instead of syllables makes also for the variety of sound. Then, too, the lines are varied by units of equal number of words, which again makes for a local unity and a local variety of sound, making for ordered units in a chaos of loose parts. As to the author of these things, his (that is mine) name is Ilya Gutner and he (I, that is) used to live in the United States, a PhD student at Brown in a department of Slavic Studies but now live in China, a PhD at a university in Shanghai, reading philosophy at a department of Chinese Politics. These poems are offered now to the wise interest of their readers: to improve on leisure and to exercise the mind.”

Robert Hasselblad has been writing poetry since college days, half a century ago. Recently retired from forty-three years in the lumber industry, he devotes time to writing, walking, reading, and speculative napping. His poems have appeared in *OntheBus:The Final Issue*, *Avalon Literary Review*, *riverbabble*, and *WA 129: Poets of Washington*.

Glenn Ingersoll works for the public library in Berkeley, California, where he hosts Clearly Meant, a reading & interview series. He has two chapbooks, *City Walks* (broken boulder) and *Fact* (Avantacular). A multi-volume prose work, *Thousand* (MCTPub), is now available from Amazon.com; ebook from Smashwords. He keeps two blogs, *LoveSettlement* and *Dare I Read*. Recent work has appeared in *Courtship of Winds*, *Visitant*, and *Caveat Lector*.

Erren Kelly is a two-time Pushcart-nominated poet from Boston who has been writing for 28 years and has over 300 publications in print and online in such publications as *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Mudfish*, *Poetry Magazine (online)*, *Ceremony*, *Cacti Fur*, *Bitterzoet*, *Cactus Heart*, *Similar Peaks*, *Gloom Cupboard*, *Poetry Salzburg*, and other publications. He is also the author of the book *Disturbing The Peace* from Night Ballet Press.

Madelyn Kreienheder is a senior English major at Truman State University on track to graduate in December with honors. Following graduation, she will enroll to earn a master’s degree in education to pursue a career as a high school English teacher. In the meantime, she is News Director of Truman’s radio station, a member of Truman’s Honors English Society, and a part-time waitress.

DS Levy's work has been published in *New Flash Fiction Review*, *Little Fiction*, *Barren Magazine*, *MoonPark Review*, *Cotton Xenomorph*, the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Columbia*, *Brevity*, and others. A collection of flash fiction, *A Binary Heart*, was published in 2017 by Finishing Line Press.

Mike Maple is a 4th-year Communication, Culture, and Media undergrad at Michigan Technological University. In his spare time, he participates in the local music scene and writes songs for the band We Should Be Laughing.

ayaz daryl nielsen, veteran and former hospice nurse, lives in Longmont, Colorado. Editor of *bear creek haiku* (28+ years/150+ issues), he is online at: *bear creek haiku poetry, poems and info*. A recent collection of his poetry, *a nameless stream*, was just released by Cholla Needles Arts and Literary Magazine.

Sam Norman has been teaching high school for 16 years at Bacon Academy in Colchester, CT. His works have appeared in *Verse-Virtual*, *Amethyst*, *Down in the Dirt*, *Red Eft*, and *Praxis*. Most of Sam's recent poetry focuses on a terrible tragedy. Sam's son, Ben, just 20 years old, lost his life in a weather-related traffic accident on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2018. Sam lives in Coventry, CT, with his wife Teri, their children, Becca and Daniel, a bunch of chickens, and their beloved dogs, Cloudy and Ripple.

James Owens's most recent book is *Mortalia* (FutureCycle Press, 2015). His poems appear widely in literary journals, including recent or upcoming publications in *Adirondack Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, and *Southword*. He earned an MFA at the University of Alabama and lives in a small town in northern Ontario.

Robin Ray, formerly of Trinidad & Tobago, currently resides in Port Townsend, WA. Educated in English Composition at Iowa State University, his works have appeared online at *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Darkest Before the Dawn*, *Red Fez*, *Fairy Tale Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Anna Teresa Slater is a high school literature and drama teacher from the Philippines and a postgraduate student in Creative Writing at Lancaster University. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Better Than Starbucks*, *The*

Fib Review, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Poetica Review*, and *Hedgehog Poetry Press*. She lives on a farm with her husband, dog, and cat.

Edward Vidaurre is the 2018-2019 McAllen, Texas, Poet Laureate and author of six collections of poetry: *JAZzHOUSE* (Prickly Pear Publishing 2019) is his latest, with *WHEN A CITY ENDS* forthcoming from King Shot Press. He writes from the front lines of the Mexican-American borderlands of El Valle in south Tejas and is Publisher/Editor of FlowerSong Books.

Thom Young is a writer from Texas. His work has been in *PBS Newshour*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Oxford Review*, and over a hundred literary journals. He is a 2008 Million Writers Award and 2016 Pushcart Prize nominee.



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